

THE REPUBLICAN PARTY.

SPEECH

OF

MR. WASHBURN, OF MAINE.

Delivered in the House of Representatives, January 10, 1859.

Mr. WASHBURN, of Maine, said :

Mr. Chairman, I have taken the floor at this time for the purpose of presenting some thoughts concerning the Republican party, its duties and dangers. As I can speak for no one but myself, their expression, I trust, can do no harm to that party or to the cause which it represents; and, perhaps, some good may be accomplished by calling the attention of its members, in this way, to the subject to which they refer.

Two antagonistic ideas underlie the political movements of the country, and will be represented by its political organizations; and no party which is not founded upon, and is not true to, one or the other of these ideas, can, in the elemental struggle which is going on, preserve anything more than a transient and unhealthy existence. Until the question, "which of these ideas shall prevail?" shall have been decided intelligently and definitively, there will be room for no other parties than those which represent its opposing sides; and such others as may endeavor to obtrude themselves upon the public, and to tease it with their impertinences, will be dismissed speedily, and with no excess of ceremony, from its presence.

The ideas to which I refer are, I need not say, the democratic and the aristocratic. The democratic affirms the equal rights of all men; while the aristocratic denies the existence of such rights, and divides mankind into classes—a governing and privileged class, and a governed and disabled class. And the real question before the American people is, which is the true government: that which recognises the democratic idea, or that which builds upon the aristocratic? I know of no better statement of the former than is to be found in the Declaration of Independence. Say the authors of that great instrument:

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. That to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, DERIVING THEIR JUST POWERS FROM THE CONSENT OF THE GOVERNED."

A practical and authoritative exposition of the latter is contained in the Lecompton Constitution, the seventh article of which reads as follows:

"The right of property is before and higher than any constitutional sanction; and the right of the owner of a slave to such slave and its increase, is the same, and as inviolable, as the right of the owner of any property whatever."

The party which, by a strange misnomer, is called Democratic, is the representative of the doctrines of the Lecompton Constitution; the life of its life is derived from the ideas upon which that instrument rests. The Republican party draws its inspiration, its principles, and its lessons of duty, from the Declaration of Independence.

The business of the former is to consolidate an oligarchy in these United States, and make it perpetual; of the latter, to secure to the people "the blessings of liberty," and to the States a "republican form of government;" and hence it is well called the Republican party, in contradistinction to the oligarchical (misnamed Democratic) party. And here, precisely, is the great vital, central issue of the day, Shall this Government be a republic or an oligarchy? In other words, shall the Constitution, which guaranties to the States a republican form of government, be preserved in its integrity and power, through the efforts and faithfulness of the Republican party, or shall the doctrines of the so-called Democratic party be accepted, and its purposes accomplished, the Constitution subverted, and a baleful oligarchy established upon the ruins of our republican system? Talk as men will, doubt or dissemble as they may, the real and imminent question is as I have stated it; and one way or the other it must be decided by the present generation. A question vaster in its issues has not arrested the attention or demanded the action of the American people since the Revolution; God grant that they may be equal to it! Mr. Chairman, shall a republican government, or that of an oligarchy, be the one under which you will live, and which you will transmit to your children? The question has been distinctly raised by the sham Democracy, and the real Democracy must settle it. That I do not err in what I have asserted to be the purpose of the mis-called Democracy, appears from facts and manifestations the most obvious and unmistakable. I can refer to but a few of them. The

self-styled Democratic party is essentially a Southern or slaveholders' party. Its policy, in reference to all questions of national or political interest, is dictated by the slaveholders. It has yielded to them, by a two-thirds rule, the nomination virtually of its candidates for President and Vice President. In its national conventions it permits a slaveholding minority to control a non-slaveholding majority; thus discarding the Democratic principle that the majority shall govern. It consents that a slaveholding minority may prescribe the issues upon which every national canvass shall be conducted, and pronounce the shibboleth which every Democrat shall repeat, from the Rio Grande to the Alleghuash. It asserts, through its President, that—

"The Supreme Court of the United States has decided that all American citizens have an equal right to take into the Territories whatever is held as property under the laws of any of the States, and to hold such property there UNDER THE GUARDIANSHIP OF THE FEDERAL CONSTITUTION, so long as the Territorial condition shall remain. This is now a well-established position."

It requires the acceptance of this "position" by the Democratic party, as one not to be denied, or even brought in question. It insists that the inhuman and impious declaration of the slaveholding judges of the Supreme Court of the United States, that those who bear "God's image cut in ebony" have "no rights which white men are bound to respect," and may be treated as outlaws and hunted as wolves, shall be received as a sacred and indubitable verity.

It demands the admission of Oregon into the Union as a State, with a Constitution which denies to colored persons, although they may be citizens of sovereign States under the Constitutions thereof, the right to maintain suits at law for the vindication of any right, or the redress of any wrong.

It compels its allies of the straight Whig school to renounce all the cherished ideas and oft-repeated declarations of the Whig party, and, by unavoidable implication, to stamp as weak or hypocritical the great chieftains of that once powerful organization—Clay, Webster, and others, whose names will stand conspicuous and eternal in the firmament of their country's history—and, wallowing in the mire of an inconceivable degradation, to assert, as a Northern Whig journal has recently asserted, that—

"The declaration that all men are endowed with an inalienable right to liberty, and that this right is self-evident, is contradicted by natural reason, by natural religion, and by the sacred Scriptures, and leads not only to infidelity, but also to anarchy and atheism."

Sir, the purpose of the Democratic party in the inauguration of that carnival of crime in Kansas, of which the annals of that people will preserve the faithful record through everlasting generations, are placed beyond all doubt in its closing scenes.

Something more than a year ago, the Democratic party caused a Constitution, prepared by the Administration at Washington, to be sent to

the Territory of Kansas, and thence returned to the President of the United States, with a certificate, held to be legal and sufficient, to the fact that it had been acted upon and adopted by the people of that Territory, as their organic law; when, in truth, the people never agreed to it, and had no opportunity of voting against it. Among its provisions was the extraordinary one I have already quoted, and which I will read again:

"The right of property is before and higher than any constitutional sanction; and the right of an owner of a slave to such slave and its increase, is the same, and as inviolable, as the right of the owner of any property whatever."

And this Constitution the Democratic party insisted, by its President, its members of the Senate and House of Representatives, (with a few exceptions,) its politicians, its State Legislatures, its newspaper press, ought to be acceptable to Congress, and recognised by that body, as a proper and republican Constitution, containing no provisions inconsistent with the theory of our Government and the principles upon which it was founded. The Democratic party, I repeat, perceived in the fact that this article was in the Constitution, no objection to the admission of Kansas as a State; on the contrary, it insisted that notwithstanding it contained this article, and mainly, no doubt, because it did contain it, the State should be admitted at once into the Union.

The object of the Democratic party in urging with unexampled zeal and pertinacity the admission of Kansas under the Lecompton Constitution, was not merely to secure another slave State, but also, and more particularly, to obtain from Congress a recognition of the doctrines so clearly set forth in that instrument—doctrines wholly incompatible with the republican idea, and which, in practice, constitute an oligarchy. For it was perceived that if Congress could be induced to admit a State into the Union presenting itself with a Constitution not republican within the meaning of that clause of the Federal Constitution which declares that "the United States shall guaranty to every State in this Union a republican form of government," but clearly founded upon oligarchical principles, the revolution in the Government, for which the slave power has been for years laboring, would be accomplished, and an oligarchy, a nation of classes, a Government founded in the theory that men are not equal, but always and necessarily belong to different classes in respect to political and civil rights and privileges, would be acknowledged to be the proper Government for a State of this Union.

Now, sir, if it be indeed true that the right of an owner of a slave "is before and higher than any constitutional sanction," it follows that slaveholding is founded in natural law; it is a God-given and indestructible right; it is above all merely human laws; it cannot be destroyed or impaired by any earthly power. This dogma, if true at all, is all true; if good in and for Kansas, it is equally good in and for Maine, and for every State in the Union. It is a truth of universal application, and can be legitimately resisted nowhere. And pray, sir, what does an ac-

knowledge of it involve? Why, undoubtedly this: that, as the right to hold slaves is from the Almighty, it is wrong, and even impious, to deny it; that whatsoever relation God has established among his creatures is not only right, but one which human laws must assail in vain; and that Governments and institutions based upon different relations are false and immoral; they are in opposition to the laws of God; in violation of His holy will; they mock His wisdom and power. Hence, you perceive, Mr. Chairman, that every free State is established upon false and atheistic principles; while those States which recognise the Divine right of men to hold property in men are in harmony with the highest laws; are true and religious States; and may well look for the favors and benedictions of Heaven. Thus we arrive at the logical conclusion, that a Government which does not rest upon the oligarchical theory of castes or classes is no rightful and legitimate Government. This is the lesson of the Lecompton Constitution; and to obtain a practical recognition of it by the Congress of the United States, is what the slaveholders designed to accomplish by the admission of Kansas under that Constitution.

Hieretofore, in the admission of States into the Union with Constitutions establishing or protecting Slavery, there has been no such acceptance of the oligarchical idea as would have resulted from the admission of Kansas under the Lecompton Constitution; for in no previous instance has the Constitution presented by a State applying for admission contained a provision like the one which I have read from the Lecompton Constitution. These Constitutions, so far as I am informed, have all been framed on the hypothesis that Slavery might be established or regulated by positive law, and not that it existed by natural and universal law. They have never assumed that Slavery was of inherent right, and that laws inhibiting it were violations of the higher law, and therefore void. From their provisions no inference could be drawn that Freedom was not as good as Slavery; and we know, historically, that their framers, with few exceptions, regarded Slavery as an evil; and that until within a few years the great majority of the citizens of the slave States have looked upon all legal and constitutional guarantees of the slave system within the States as the adjuncts of a state of society which would soon pass away. The Constitutions to which I have referred contained provisions for the regulation of an existing evil; but the Lecompton Constitution denied that Slavery was an evil, and affirmed its intrinsic rightfulness and its universal necessity. The former treated Slavery as a thing to be endured for a time, notwithstanding its oligarchical character; the latter as an institution to be cherished and defended on account of that character. A State which tolerates a system oligarchical in its nature, and which it knows not how to be well rid of, may, nevertheless, be a republican State, within the meaning of the Federal Constitution; for its government and temper may, on the whole, be republican; whereas, a State in which such a system should be in accordance with its central

ideas, the outgrowth of its cherished polity and the substratum of its society, could not, with any propriety, be called republican.

This extraordinary article of the Lecompton Constitution was not necessary for the protection of Slavery in Kansas; for this end might have been effected by such provisions as have been embodied in the Constitutions of other States; but for the designs of the slaveholders it was of the first importance. If they could succeed in bringing Kansas into the Union with a Constitution not merely protecting or establishing Slavery, but also declaring it to be a just and indispensable relation in every well-ordered society and in every true Government, it was believed that all serious opposition to Slavery and its extension in this country would cease, and that the transformation of the Government from a Union of free States to a confederation of oligarchies would be easy and certain. Failing to carry this point, the Democratic party next insisted, to the end that the oligarchical idea should in some way be declared preferable to the republican, that a State with a slave Constitution should come into the Union with forty-five thousand inhabitants, and protested that no free State should be admitted with less than ninety-three thousand.

Mr. Chairman, I have dwelt longer, perhaps, than was necessary, upon these facts and references; but I desired to show, by the most incontestable proofs, what the ulterior designs of the Slavery propagandists are, and that the Democratic party is their organ and representative, and fully committed to the work of executing their commands.

Now, sir, the other idea—the Democratic as opposed to the aristocratic, the Republican as contradistinguished from the oligarchic—the idea upon which this Government was founded, will never be left without a representative among the political parties of the country. When, after years of uneasiness and apprehension, it became apparent to the people of the free States that the Democratic party, as it calls itself, had been subsidized by the slaveholders, and it was seen that among the organizations of the day there was no one which, from its combined earnestness and liberality, was competent to maintain the cause of liberty and republicanism against the plottings of the slaveholding oligarchy, they delayed not to call into existence a party which they hoped might be able to execute this high commission, and they gave it the name of the REPUBLICAN PARTY. Sir, what better or more appropriate name could have been given to it? It is suggestive of the better days of the Republic; it has an odor of genuine nationality; its associations are of liberty, order, and law; it is the name by which the author of the Declaration of Independence, and the father of the Constitution, chose to be known; it speaks for itself, and needs no qualifying terms; and men who are afraid or ashamed to own it, are not, I fear, those to whose guidance the ark of the Constitution may be safely committed. The party which is worthy to wear it should hold every lover of liberty, every hater of oppression, every opponent of Slavery fanaticism, whether in the North or in the South, for it draws

the breath of its life from the Declaration of Independence, and it "stands in defence of the Constitution."

This party was formally organized at Philadelphia, in the month of June, 1856, and in the succeeding November it carried the elections in eleven of the free States by unparalleled majorities; and if it is not to-day in the ascendancy in every free State this side of the Rocky Mountains, the exceptions are those States only in which its friends have been unwilling to stand upon the strength of their own principles, and within the organization of their own party, but have sought alliances and coalitions with men, and bodies of men, whose purposes were not coincident with their own, thinking to gain something by swapping off principles for voters, and ideas for allies. Sir, this policy cannot win. God forbid that it should. Its fruits, where it bears any, are Dead Sea apples. The party which seeks to obtain power by adopting it will expose itself to the fate of the eagle who stole a piece of flesh, to which some embers were sticking, and thereby burnt up its own nest. How long before men and parties will learn that nothing is to be gained by fear and cowardice; that no party can or ought to reap success which does not believe something, and believe it with all its might? Mr. Chairman, parties and men, to borrow a figure from Walter Savage Landor, "like columns, are only strong while they are upright." If our idea is not the true one—if an oligarchy be better than a republic, or if there is no real danger, and the slaveholders do not deserve to be opposed, let us say so like honest men; but if, believing in Republican principles, and seeing that they are assailed, we desire that they may prevail, let us say *that*, and say it as if we were not afraid that we should fail in our efforts to maintain them. We cannot fail, if we are true. There were never any issues presented to the American people, so strong as those which have been given to the care of the Republican party. They are stronger than the party, or than any party that ever was in this country; and the organization which is faithful to them is stronger than any man in it. We shall grow weak only as we ignore or deny them. In those States where the Republicans have been contented to abide in their own organization, and rely upon their own issues, the party is united and impregnable, and a like policy will be attended with similar results in every State. But if Republicans will encourage men not to depend upon their own principles, but rather upon coalitions, bargains, and offsets—so much for so much—it will be impossible for them to preserve a party which will enjoy the confidence and respect of the people.

I have noticed that many persons, Americans and others, in opposition, are accustomed to speak of the Republican party, not as a great, fixed, necessary party, with rights and purposes of its own, but as a chance gathering together of men, or as a mere organization of convenience, ready and fit to be used from time to time, as occasion may seem to require, as an instrumentality to defeat the Democratic party; not for the sake of vindicating Republican principles, but to

beat the Democracy, and place a new set of men in power. Not long since, a number of very respectable gentlemen assembled in this city to see what was to be done with this Republican party, and how it could be made most available—not for a successful resistance to Democratic Pro-Slavery schemes and plans, but to whip the Democratic party. And they were so kind, according to a New York journal, as to say that the Republican party "is a great power," and that "its disorganization would be neither politic nor desirable; that said party has vitality and force which must be availed of in any effort to reform the Federal Government." I can smile at the charming patronage of these benignant gentlemen; but it gives me inexpressible pain to know that Republicans here and there are, by their words and counsels, giving these men and others license, or excuses at least, for holding the low views which they have of the character and mission of the Republican party. It is too bad, that men calling themselves Republicans should give countenance to this degradation of their party, treating it as a piece of merchandise, to be disposed of to the highest bidder; and I have observed that there are some among them who seem even more anxious to dispose of what they have on hand, than get anything in return; rivalling in benevolence the liberal publican, who, we are told, "exults to trust, and blushes to be paid."

Sir, a party must have faith in itself, and respect for itself, if it would be more than a mockery and a sham. To be powerful and respected, it must be positive and self-reliant. Its ideas and purposes must be clearly defined and well understood. It must have unquestioning faith in the truth, fitness, and necessity of its issues and objects; for its first duty is to be, in respect to these, as perfect as it knows; they should express its best thoughts and its profoundest convictions. A party careful to be right will be earnest, and earnestness is the hardest opponent that wrong and error can encounter. A mere opposition party is, of necessity, a failure; it rarely succeeds in carrying an election; and when it does, it inevitably falls to pieces afterwards; for without unity of purpose, or homogeneousness of *matériel*, with nothing to keep it together but the "cohesive power of plunder," it quarrels about the spoils, and, by a poetic justice, finds its executioners in the causes of its apparent success.

Shall we admit that a party which was brought into the world to oppose the slave power in its efforts to overthrow our republican institutions, to maintain the fundamental ideas of the Government, to resist an oligarchy, to stay the spread of Slavery, to restore the "action of the Government to the principles of Washington and Jefferson," is not strong enough and well-founded enough to succeed? That it has anything to gain by avoiding these issues or exchanging them for others? If there ever was a party on the earth which could not afford to hesitate as to its duty, or to be less than true and logical, it is the Republican party. Its fidelity is the condition of its success.

Let us, Mr. Chairman, learn wisdom from our opponents. Look at the Democratic party, and note its policy. It has held possession of the

Government, with short interruptions, for more than a quarter of a century; not because it has been always right, but because it has been in earnest, and has *dared to trust itself*. It has never paid court to its opponents, or stooped to speculate upon their weaknesses and divisions; always bold and uncompromising, it has never doubted its own sufficiency and invincibility, and so it has ever been a mighty power in the land.

And let not the lesson to be read in the fate of the old Whig party be lost upon us. It was the weakness of that organization, that it was too much a party of expedients and providences—always waiting for something to turn up. It had no sufficient unity and persistency, and lacked prevailing faith. Its questions were of measures rather than principles. It was more disposed to be controlled by circumstances than to make itself the master of circumstances; and so, with all its intelligence and worth, it enjoyed no great triumphs. In 1840 and 1848 it resolved itself into an opposition party; and though it gained “famous victories,” it gained neither strength nor power. Divided in its counsels, the Democratic party ruled, in fact, with the exception of a brief period, the Administrations which it inaugurated.

In 1854, the slave power, acting through the Democratic party, demanded the abrogation of the Missouri compromise, by which Slavery had been excluded from all that part of the Louisiana purchase lying north of $36^{\circ} 30'$; and that party, being in power, of course granted its request. A large majority of the people of the free States resisted this demand, not merely that it involved a violation of plighted faith, but also for the reason that the prohibition sought to be removed was within the constitutional power of Congress, and a wise and just exercise thereof. The Democratic party North attempted to justify the Nebraska bill upon the ground that it was necessary to a practical recognition by the Government of what was called popular sovereignty. This was a false and delusive pretext, for the reasons that there was no real popular sovereignty in the bill, and that the great majority of those who supported it denied that there could be any such thing in a Territory. The questions raised by this measure were discussed before the country with uncommon ability and thoroughness, and its verdict has been rendered against the Douglas-Cass doctrines of Territorial sovereignty. The general power of Congress over the Territories is scarcely denied anywhere to-day. The Dred Scott opinion affirms it, but maintains that it is limited and restrained in the single case of Slavery by the Federal Constitution, by virtue of which that system is guaranteed and protected in all the Territories of the United States. This is now the received doctrine of the Slave Democracy. The Supreme Court of the United States had, in previous decisions, declared that the power of Congress was plenary and unlimited; and such had been the construction by all departments of the Government, by all statesmen and lawyers, down to 1847 or 1848, when the dogma of squatter or popular sovereignty was fished up by General Cass, in his pursuit under difficulties of a Presidential nomination. And it

is not unworthy of remark, that all the politicians who have undertaken to engineer this heresy—Cass, Douglas, and the rest—have been “hoist with their own petard,” and their broken remains are scattered over all quarters of the country; their bones, if I may borrow an expression not unfamiliar in this House, are “now bleaching” on the sea side and the lake shore, on mountain and prairie, from Maine to Kansas—to which I will respectfully add, Long may they bleach! [Laughter.] There are not now so many men in this country as would fill an omnibus who deny the authority of Congress to legislate for the Territories, subject, of course, to the Constitution of the United States; and the Republicans maintain that there is nothing in that instrument to forbid legislation upon the question of Slavery. They have ever denounced the squatter-sovereignty doctrine as a heresy and a swindle, and upon grounds the most stable and satisfactory.

The Republican theory, as I understand it, is, that the Constitution has vested in Congress original and plenary power over the Territories; that it is bound to exercise this power for the advantage of the Territories and for the general welfare; and that, as a matter of convenience and expediency, it is well and proper to commit to the people of the Territories the privilege of making their own laws on all subjects in which they are *alone* concerned; in other words, that in these cases Congress should make the laws through the agency of the Territorial Legislatures; but that upon questions which interest the people of the whole country, and where wrong or unwise legislation would affect injuriously the people of the States, who are the proprietors of the Territories, there the appointed organ of the proprietors, the Congress of the United States, should legislate directly thereon; otherwise the sovereignty of the people of the United States would be laid at the feet of the interlopers and squatters who might take themselves, perhaps to escape from the hands of justice, beyond the limits of the States. And it has been uniformly held by the Republican party, and by all parties down to 1847, that the question whether Slavery should occupy our new Territories, was one of such general interest and importance that it should be reserved for the action of Congress. The Republican party affirms what has been well stated by Hon. Caleb Cushing, that “negro servitude is a deadly blight upon the social and economical condition of a country, weighing down its prosperity, corrupting the morals of its people of every class and color, and condemning it to long endurance of public evils.” Hence it follows, logically and irresistibly, that whenever the members of this party have the power to inhibit it, it is their duty to exercise that power. Congress can keep it from a Territory if it will pass a law for its exclusion; and from the State to be formed out of such Territory; for in no community from which Slavery is excluded till it becomes a State, will it ever be subsequently established. It is said that by the Dred Scott decision the power of Congress to prohibit Slavery is denied. I answer, there is no such decision; the opinions of the slaveholding judges upon this

point were mere *obiter dicta*, of no binding force whatever; and, further, that if they were opinions upon questions before the court, they would not be binding, as a statement of political truths, upon Congress or the people. The people are the source of power, and the ultimate judges in all political questions. Sir, if there is any man, or number of men, in this country, who are authorized to decide political questions, and from whose decrees there is no appeal, then we have a despotism; and it matters not whether there is one despot or nine, or whether the power is lodged with a King, a Directory, or a Supreme Court. And, sir, to repudiate and resent this usurpation of the slaveholding judges, this assumption of authority to decide such questions, and to impose a master upon the people, I would have Congress, on all proper occasions, affirm and exercise the right to legislate for the prohibition of Slavery in the Territories. This should be done, that there may be no presumptions against this right from non-user or acquiescences in the opposite theory. For these considerations, I desire to thank my friend from Missouri [Mr. BLAIR] for the resolutions which he offered in the House a few days ago, drawn, as I am informed, by the distinguished gentleman who represented that State for so long a period in the Senate of the United States, (Colonel Benton.) One of them is as follows, and it contains sound doctrine:

"6. *Resolved*, That said decisions are in derogation of the power of Congress, and restrictive of its time-honored rights and practice to legislate for Territories; and being so derogatory and restrictive, it becomes the duty of Congress to vindicate its rights by asserting its full authority to legislate upon Slavery in Territories, and declaring its total disregard of the said illegal, extra-judicial, and void decisions of the Supreme Court; which, accordingly, is hereby done."

Mr. BLAIR. Those resolutions were drawn by Colonel Benton. I have the original in my possession, in his handwriting.

Mr. WASHBURN, of Maine. Mr. Chairman, the fate of the Territories to be formed from our unoccupied domain, is in the keeping of Congress; and it will be for it to determine, so far as some of them at least are concerned, whether they shall be slave or free.

But the Republican party does not stop with the assertion that Congress ought to intervene to keep Slavery out of the Territories. It also maintains—if I have been properly instructed in what it has inscribed upon its list of duties and purposes—that wherever, for any reason, an act of Congress cannot be passed to keep Slavery out of a Territory, the only remaining way to secure this end shall be resorted to, and the people of the Territories permitted to exclude it by their own legislative authority. It would rely upon the people of the Territory to repress an evil which can be reached by no other power; but it does not leave to popular sovereignty the opportunity to introduce an undoubted evil into a Territory, or commit an acknowledged crime, when it can legally prevent it. To act other-

wise—to say to the people of a Territory, "Slavery is a great wrong; it will be an everlasting curse to you if you have it; we can keep it from your midst if we will, but we choose not to do so, in order that you may have an opportunity to reject it if that shall be your pleasure"—would be weak indeed; and worse than weak in those cases where it would be seen beforehand that they would not reject it. Yet, I am told, there are men in the Republican ranks who insist that this intervention policy is a very unwise and mistaken policy; and that, although Congress has undoubtedly the right to prohibit Slavery, it ought not to exercise it, but should leave to the people of the Territories to decide for themselves whether or not they will have what they (the Republicans) declare to be an unmitigated and gigantic evil. And who are the people to whom it is proposed to leave this question? A few hundreds of run-aways or outlaws, it may be. And who are to be affected by their decision? All the people of the United States. To these first inhabitants, such as they are, good or bad, is to be left the settlement of questions of supreme importance to all the States; questions like these: Shall there be a majority of free States? or shall the slave States outnumber the free? Shall democratic ideas or aristocratic be encouraged? Shall the Government be republican or oligarchical? Shall Congress be so constituted that its majorities will protect free labor, or oppress it? The people of the States are interested in these questions deeply, vitally; and they have the power to determine what the answers to them shall be. But it is proposed that those who *would* decide right, should abdicate in favor of the people of the Territories, who *may* decide wrong.

It is safer and wiser, I hear it said, to leave a people to act freely, than to hedge them around with legal restraints. It is better that a people should do right because they desire to, than because the law keeps them from doing wrong. But whether it is better that they should do wrong, there being no law, than to do no wrong, the law preventing, is a question which I would commend to the consideration of the philosophers of popular sovereignty. This theory of giving men the largest opportunity to do wrong to themselves and others, strikes at all legal restraints. I am not prepared to say that it would be wise to repeal all our penal laws because it is better that a man should do right for the right's sake than from fear of punishment. To carry out the ideas of these gentlemen to their logical results, your statutes against larceny, murder, treason, and other crimes, should be repealed, that men may be left perfectly free to do as they will; because if they will not steal, or kill, or seek to overthrow the State, in the absence of law forbidding these crimes, they will, not improbably, be better men and citizens than if they had been placed in circumstances where such laws might have had an influence upon their characters and lives.

On the whole, sir, I think I will stand by the ancient ways. I will abide with the old prudence, and where I have two weapons to destroy a monster, I will not throw away either. I am

not quite prepared to adopt a theory which would compel me to say to the people of Utah: "Form your own institutions in your own way; it is better you should practice polygamy without stint, than that Congress should restrain you by law."

The theory of Territorial sovereignty may be consistent enough with the principles of Senator Douglas, and those who, like him, consider it a matter of indifference whether Freedom or Slavery shall be established in a State, and who think that, on the whole, it would be better to have some slave States than none; but how it can find favor with those who regard Slavery as a wrong, or a great impolicy, I confess I am unable to understand.

One word more on this subject. Granting that there is no further necessity for resorting to Congressional intervention, and all that can be done hereafter must be accomplished by popular sovereignty, is there any great wisdom in hurrying to renounce our old faith, in parading our former opinions as mistakes before the country, in saying, in effect, that Senator Douglas did what was right in principle when he brought in the Nebraska bill, and that those who opposed him were in error, and ought at once to have fallen in with the Illinois Senator, and aided him in his efforts to "establish a great principle?" Suppose they had done so, and no excitement had arisen, as in that case none would, Kansas, from its proximity to Missouri, would have been, inevitably, a slave State, and the question of republican or oligarchic would have been already decided.

Mr. Chairman, how can a party hope to obtain power, or to keep it, if it has no certain opinions upon questions of such magnitude as this? Either the people will say its leaders are ignorant, and know not what is sound doctrine; or they are destitute of principle, and care not what is; and, at any rate, are very unsafe guides.

If there are any Republicans who think that because Kansas is saved, there is no longer occasion to maintain their organization—that the slaveholders will rest from their agitations, and make no further attempts to revolutionize the Government—let me assure them that they never labored under a more fatal mistake. The struggle for the supremacy of the system of servile over free labor has but fairly begun; and although the champions of Slavery failed in the Kansas campaign, they have not laid down their arms, nor will they till many more fields shall have been lost. At present they are confident of ultimate success, and the least sanguine of them will tell you

"I am but sorry, not afraid! delay'd,
But nothing altered: What I was, I am;
More straining on for plucking back."

They know that there can be no stand-still to Slavery, and that unless they would prepare for its gradual removal, the work of aggression must go on. Arizona must be made a slave Territory. Cuba must furnish two slave States, and Mexico and Central America an indefinite number more. The slave trade must be reopened; Dred Scott decisions repeated, asserting the nationality of

Slavery, and affirming the right to hold slaves in every State, North or South, irrespective of local laws, until the oligarchical idea shall be accepted in all departments of the Government and in all sections of the country.

And, sir, during the controversy which these unjust and revolutionary demands will occasion, the Republican party, or, if that should fail to do the work required of it, one more faithful and vigorous, will be a necessary and unavoidable political organization. And I do not believe that it will be constituted hereafter of those only who are now within its ranks, but that it will embrace, also, all Americans and anti-Lecompton Democrats who do not mean to submit to the subjugation of Freedom, or the overthrow of our political institutions. Upon these overshadowing issues, there can be but two opinions or parties; and those who are not with the slaveholders' party, must be with that of their opponents. Wise and conservative Southern men, too, who are not the propagandists of Slavery—men who do not desire the extension of that system more than the continuance of the Government as established by our fathers—should be with this party, for it seeks nothing inconsistent with their honor, their rights, or their true interests. It will leave them to manage their domestic affairs in their own way, claiming no authority to interfere therein. It will strive to place them on no ground which was not occupied by the South, for the generation succeeding the Revolution. Southern men who are willing to stand where their fathers stood at the close of the second war with Great Britain, will find in the principles and purposes of the Republican party nothing to which they will desire to object, but in that party the instrumentality for which they have long waited, to restore peace and harmony to all sections of their beloved country, and to strengthen their hands for the grand consummation which must be nearest to their hearts. It appears to me that there are no men so much interested as they, that the Republicans should submit to no change of purpose or policy, to no dilution of their principles, or lowering of their standard. But if they think otherwise, and the Republicans, in obedience to their requirements, yield their distinctive position, I have not the shadow of a doubt that they will go into a minority in nearly every free State in 1860. Maine, strongly Republican as she is, I am confident could not be depended upon to defeat the Democratic party on any other platform. Would it be wise to exchange Maine, not for Kentucky, but for a possibility of carrying that State? Who would advise a surrender of New York for the sake of running an electoral ticket in Virginia? Thousands of earnest and efficient Republicans in every Northern State will leave their organization the moment it becomes a mere opposition party. They have learnt that a party, into which Southern men come for the sake of gaining a victory over the Democrats, and not for the purpose of sustaining Republican principles, must allow them to dictate the issues so far as the Slavery question is concerned; and that they, fearing the immediate consequences at home of a recognition of Republican doctrines,

will insist upon its being upon this subject a mere acquiescing and do-nothing party—in making it, in fine, the practical abettor and not the opponent of the Democratic party; make it what the Whig party was, in 1850, when its administration became the defender of the compromise measures of that year. Do those who remember how impossible it was to bring the masses of that party to the support of the policy of Mr. Fillmore, believe that the Republican party, more earnest and determined than ever the Whig party was, will consent that their organization shall tread the path which led to the ruin of the Whig party? Friends, Republicans, opponents of the slaveholding propaganda! I beg you to be wise in time; stand upon the solid ground of your imperishable principles; respect your party as a fixed fact and a necessity, and it will be the party that for years to come will hold the power in this country. And, sir, I venture to predict, that within ten years from this time it will have the support of a large majority of the people of the slave States.

Am I told that there are other things than those regarding Slavery to which a great political party should give its attention, I answer, that I acknowledge it; but add that, upon the questions referred to, no party has ever been able to stand against the so-called Democracy; and that it can be opposed successfully only by one which the people believe, and can readily see, is more truly Democratic. I would say, also, that these Slavery issues are more important than all others; and, besides, important as the others may be, and as I know them to be, there is no hope of their being justly treated, except in the success of the Republican party. If we would have economy in the Administration, justice to all, honesty and good faith, a development of the vast resources of the country, a wise regard to the interests of free labor, let us work to strengthen and consolidate the Republican party, and in so doing we shall treat these questions as important, but subordinate and incidental. Seek first to place the liberties of the country on an immovable foundation, and all other needful things shall be added.

I hear it objected, that the Republicans are unwise in insisting upon formulas and platforms, which are unnecessary, as they will give them no new recruits, and will drive away many who would be willing to act with them, if not thus repelled. I answer, that in some way the principles and objects of the party must be distinctly understood; that common honesty, as well as sound policy, requires this. If, however, its purposes are so well known, and its policy so distinctly pronounced, that there can be no misunderstanding in regard to them; or if it shall have in the persons of its standard-bearers those who are regarded as embodiments of its principles, living witnesses to the truth, written and formal platforms and declarations may be dispensed with. But I think there should be no objection, at any time, to a plain and truthful statement by a party of its principles and issues. The Democratic party has for many years been in the habit of adopting a platform at its national conventions,

and I have never understood that it has suffered from this practice. It seems to me there is great force in the remark of a celebrated author and statesman, "that doctrines must generally be embodied before they can excite a strong public feeling;" and a platform, if not, strictly speaking, the embodiment of a doctrine, is such a deliberate and authoritative expression of it, as makes it clear to the public mind, and palpable to its touch.

I am informed that two or three Northern States are not up to the Republican standard. Perhaps not; though I doubt the statement so far as their people are concerned, but do not in reference to some of their politicians. However this may be, I am certain that if the Republican party will, by its earnestness, firmness, and self-respect, persuade the people of those States that it is to remain in the field till the objects for which it was instituted are accomplished, every opponent of the slave-struck Democracy, and every man in them who believes that white men have interests which should be cared for and protected, will find himself fighting gallantly within its ranks.

That it will remain in the field till the vast questions which I called it into life are disposed of as they should be, I will not permit myself to doubt. The inherent vitality that there is in truth instructs me that the leading idea of this party can never be extinguished; and this idea is so thoroughly accepted by its masses, and so many of them feel that the path of principle is the only road to success; that its infidelity or disintegration are events placed far beyond the machinations of those who feel that their own advancement has little encouragement from a line of policy which looks to power as a means and not as an end; and when they hear it said by the latter that the first object is to get power, they add, *to get it fairly and honestly*, perceiving that power obtained for no specific purpose is to be relied on for no definite good; and they will insist, that in this instance, at least, power is more certain to be won by a frank avowal of principle than by any other course; that the highest policy is to maintain the Republican doctrines in their integrity and fulness, and to bear aloft its standard at all times and everywhere.

Sir, if ever men were greatly in earnest in a political movement in this country, those who constitute a vast majority of the Republican party are so. They have enlisted for the war, and while it lasts they will move on fearless and undiscouraged, however many rebuffs and defeats they may encounter, and proceed from what source they may. They will be oppressed by no fear of ultimate defeat, and will tell you that with faith, a good heart, and a good cause, success is certain. Mr. Chairman, with all these our Republican ship is freighted, and thus we bid her God-speed on her voyage.

"In spite of rock and tempest roar,

In spite of false lights on the shore,

Sail on, nor fear to breast the sea!

Our hearts, our hopes, are all with thee;

Our hearts, our hopes, our prayers, our tears,

Our faith, triumphant o'er our fears,

Are all with thee—are all with thee."